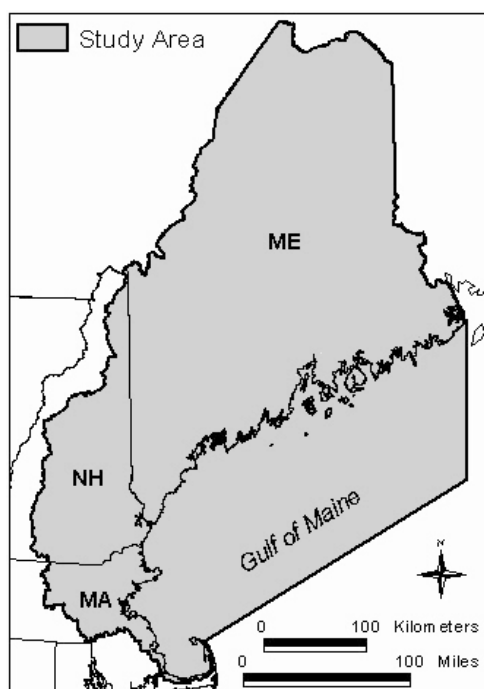


## Identifying, mapping and protecting habitat in the Gulf of Maine watershed

### Gulf of Maine Coastal Program

The Gulf of Maine watershed, situated in the northeast corner of the United States and the southeast corner of Canada, includes more than 43,000 square miles of land in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The watershed includes the biologically productive Gulf of Maine as well as coastal habitats (salt marshes, mudflats, sandy beaches, intertidal zone, and islands) and inland waterways, wetlands, woodlands, and grasslands. The Gulf of Maine watershed provides productive nurseries for many marine fish, riverine pathways for historically abundant populations of anadromous fish, important habitat for breeding, migratory and wintering waterbirds and neotropical migrants, and vital habitat for nationally threatened and endangered species. Many who live in the Gulf of Maine watershed appreciate its biological wealth. However, habitat loss and degradation from sprawling development, wetland and associated upland loss, overharvesting, oil spills, pollution, and other cumulative effects of development threaten the ecological integrity of the watershed.



In order to protect fish and wildlife habitat for endangered, threatened or declining species in the region, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Gulf of Maine Program, in coordination with the Gulf of Maine Rivers Ecoteam, identified, mapped and ranked important fish and wildlife habitat for priority species throughout the Gulf of Maine watershed. USFWS biologists have selected 91 species that regularly inhabit the Gulf of Maine watershed that meet the following criteria:

- federally endangered, threatened and candidate species,
- migratory birds, anadromous and estuarine fish that are declining nationwide,
- migratory birds, anadromous and estuarine fish that are threatened or endangered in two of the three states in the Gulf of Maine watershed, and
- other birds that have been identified as species of concern by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, the Colonial Waterbird Plan and Partners in Flight.

*Note: All species included in this analysis are listed on the reverse side.*

Biologists determined habitat values for all species -- from actual sightings, or by developing habitat suitability models reflecting the environmental requirements for each species. Once habitat maps were completed for each species, biologists combined all of the maps to create a composite map identifying priority grassland, forest, freshwater wetland and estuarine habitat. In addition, individual parcels of land can be analyzed to identify the predicted habitat values for all 91 species on that parcel. All of this information is available to help conservationists and town planners focus habitat protection efforts in areas of greatest biological value. Results of this analysis have been used to help implement on-the-ground conservation initiatives, including:

- "Beginning with Habitat," an initiative that identifies and prioritizes high value habitat identified by our USFWS office, Maine Natural Areas Program and Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in order to support pro-active protection and planning efforts conducted by state and federal agencies, town officials, non-governmental conservation partners and willing landowners,
- identification and prioritization of land with important habitat values in order to catalyze and support proposals for habitat protection through federal and state grant programs (including North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants, Coastal Wetland Grants, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants, Land for Maine's Future Program),
- educational/outreach activities with conservation partners, teachers and the media,
- comprehensive planning and management activities on national wildlife refuges,
- permit and license review by town, state and federal agencies, and
- contaminants and oil spill damage assessment and mitigation.

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# *Gulf of Maine watershed priority species list*

## **Birds (75 species):**

American bittern  
American black duck  
American oystercatcher  
American woodcock  
Arctic tern  
Bald eagle  
Baltimore oriole  
Bay-breasted warbler  
Bicknell's thrush  
Black scoter  
Black tern  
Black-bellied plover  
Blackburnian warbler  
Blackpoll warbler  
Black-throated blue warbler  
Blue-winged warbler  
Buff-breasted sandpiper  
Canada warbler  
Cape May warbler  
Chestnut-sided warbler  
Common loon  
Common snipe  
Common tern  
Eastern meadowlark  
Field sparrow  
Golden-winged warbler  
Grasshopper sparrow  
Hudsonian godwit  
Killdeer  
Least sandpiper  
Least tern  
Little blue heron  
Little gull  
Louisiana waterthrush  
Marsh wren  
Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow  
Northern flicker  
Northern goshawk  
Northern harrier  
Olive-sided flycatcher  
Osprey  
Peregrine falcon  
Pied-billed grebe  
Piping plover  
Prairie warbler  
Purple sandpiper  
Razorbill  
Red crossbill  
Red-headed woodpecker  
Red knot  
Red-shouldered hawk  
Roseate tern  
Ruddy turnstone  
Saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrow  
Sanderling  
Scaup (greater and lesser)  
Seaside sparrow  
Sedge wren  
Semipalmated sandpiper  
Short-billed dowitcher  
Short-eared owl  
Snowy egret  
Solitary sandpiper  
Spruce grouse  
Surf scoter  
Tricolored heron  
Upland sandpiper  
Veery  
Whimbrel  
Whip-poor-will  
White-winged scoter  
Wood duck  
Wood thrush  
Yellow rail

## **Fish (9 species):**

Alewife  
American eel  
American shad  
Atlantic salmon  
Atlantic sturgeon  
Blueback herring  
Bluefish  
Shortnose sturgeon  
Winter flounder

## **Plants (4 species):**

Eastern prairie fringed orchid  
Furbish's lousewort  
Robbins' cinquefoil  
Small whorled pogonia

## **Mammal:**

Canada lynx

## **Invertebrate:**

Horseshoe crab

## **Herps:**

Plymouth redbelly turtle

